

the device approval time has been virtually cut in half. The program proved very popular among companies making these devices and the patients who have benefited from them.

However, Congress built a trigger into the law. The trigger sun-sets the program on September 30, 2005 when Congress fails to appropriate the amount authorized under the 2002 law. Congress provided the \$216.7 million required in fiscal year 2005. But in 2003 and 2004, Congress shortchanged MDUFMA by \$40 million. That shortfall will cause MDUFMA to expire on September 30th. We can't allow that to happen. Too much is at stake.

H.R. 3243 renews MDUFMA for two years and brings some much needed stability to the program. In 2007 we will revisit a full reauthorization of MDUFMA and finetune the program. I urge my colleagues to support this bill. I'd like to thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from California, Ms. ESHOO, for her hard work on this legislation.

POSTAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND ENHANCEMENT ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. DEBORAH PRYCE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 26, 2005

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 22) to reform the postal laws of the United States:

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this rule. As the Chairman knows, I filed an amendment with the Rules Committee to address important mailings to consumers containing notification of a data breach affecting personal information. While I withdrew my amendment, I was pleased to work with the Chairman of the Government Reform Committee to include report language regarding this significant issue. I thank both Chairmen for their hard work on this bill.

Mr. Speaker I rise today to bring attention to the important issue of data security.

Identity theft is the fastest-growing white collar crime in the United States. The Federal Trade Commission estimates that 10 million Americans fall victim to identity theft each year, costing consumers and businesses more than 55 billion dollars.

Identity theft is the most frequent complaint to the FTC from all 50 states, with the number of complaints having grown for the fourth consecutive year.

What takes only seconds for a hacker to destroy can take years for companies and individuals to rebuild. A thief can jeopardize a person's financial security by opening new lines of credit or procuring unsecured loans under a person's name.

Victims of identity theft spend an average of 90 hours of their own time and 1,700 dollars in out-of-pocket expenses clearing their credit and name.

The first line of defense in combating these reckless acts is to make the victims aware of what is taking place. If there is unauthorized access to sensitive financial information, the breached company needs to notify the potentially affected consumers, and make them aware that their data security may have been compromised.

After an investigation determines whether or not the breached information will lead to misuse, the customer must be made aware. But with all the mail that Americans are besieged with on a daily basis, we must take steps to insure that consumers can differentiate between what is critical and what is not. For that reason, I feel that all notices should contain a heading that this is an "IMPORTANT DATA BREACH NOTIFICATION."

By ensuring that consumers are aware of what is going on with their data security, we can help prevent millions of dollars a year in consumer costs and countless hours spent by innocent Americans who have been victimized by identity thieves.

Labeling the envelopes will go far towards this goal, and I urge my colleagues to think about this common sense solution to a serious problem that can touch any American at any time.

A BILL TO MAKE THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MINORITY VET- ERANS PERMANENT

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 27, 2005

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation that is vital to the interests of minority veterans in our Nation. Current law mandates the termination of the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans, ACMV, on December 31, 2009. My bill would simply repeal the provision of law that discontinues this important committee's mandate so that its critical work on behalf of minority veterans can continue.

The Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans operates in conjunction with the VA Center for Minority Veterans. This committee consists of members appointed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and includes minority veterans, representatives of minority veterans groups and individuals who are recognized authorities in fields pertinent to the needs of minority veterans.

The Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans helps the VA Center for Minority Veterans by advising the Secretary on the adoption and implementation of policies and programs affecting minority veterans, and by making recommendations to the VA for the establishment or improvement of programs in the department for which minority veterans are eligible.

The committee has consistently provided the VA and Congress with balanced, forwardlooking recommendations, many of which go far beyond the unique needs of minority veterans. In 2002, the committee met in my hometown of Chicago and warned that in the Chicago regional office "it was mentioned that it was much easier to deny benefits than to grant benefits because of stringent requirements of VBA and Court of Appeal for Veterans Claims."

Two years later, the Chicago Sun-Times exposed that Illinois veterans ranked 50th in disability benefit compensation. That information sparked a campaign by the Illinois congressional delegation to rectify the situation. Since then, the VA Inspector General has issued his report and recommendations and the Sec-

retary has pledged additional staff and resources to the Chicago regional office.

The committee will also be needed in the future since the unique concerns of minority veterans will become increasingly important for our Nation during the next decade.

Currently, 18 percent of the troops serving in Iraq are African-American, while 10 percent are Hispanic. The concerns of these veterans and others will not go away on December 31, 2009, and neither should the committee created to ensure that they are represented. The Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans has helped our minority veterans from past wars with programs to address their concerns. We should not shortchange our newly returning soldiers by allowing this committee's tenure to expire.

Many specific issues of concern to minority veterans need to be addressed further. Minority veterans confront the debilitating effects of post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, and substance abuse in greater numbers. Minority veterans suffer from a higher incidence of homelessness. Access to health care for Native American veterans is also a common problem. In addition, access to adequate job training is a difficulty for many minority veterans, a high percentage of whom qualify as low-income, category A veterans.

Unfortunately, discrimination and cultural insensitivity remain problematic for minority veterans at many VA facilities. The Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans still has a lot of work to do, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation to make this important committee permanent.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HENRY E. BROWN, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 27, 2005

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am writing to notify you that I was absent July 22, 2005. The reason for my absence was that I had to have an emergency appendectomy at the Bethesda Naval Hospital.

Regarding the votes that I missed please see below for the way that I would have voted had I been present: Vote No. 415—Velázquez No. 3 amendment—"nay" and vote No. 416—final passage of H.R. 3070—NASA Authorization Act of 2005—"aye."

CELEBRATING ANNE SPEAKE'S SERVICE TO THE CENTRAL VAL- LEY OF CALIFORNIA

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 27, 2005

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Anne Speake for the service she has given to the Central Valley of California and to recognize her 75th birthday on August 8, 2005. Mrs. Speake has dedicated much of her life to helping the citizens of Fresno and to promoting small business.

Anne Speake, the founder and President of International English Institute, is widely recognized as an authority on overseas marketing.